

**FINAL REPORT ON USAID/ICMA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COURSE
“Cities Matter: Principles and
Practices of Local Government”**

June 22-26, 1998
Alexandria, Virginia

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Final Report
Cities Matter: Principles and Practices of Local Government: #2
June 22 – June 26, 1998
Submitted By
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1. Purpose and Overview of Report

From June 22-26, 1998 the second “Cities Matter” course was presented to more than 30 USAID staff from 12 Missions and Washington, DC. This report highlights the results of that course, focusing on such issues as adjustments from the first training and recommendations for future ones here and abroad based on the evaluations of the participants and the instructors.

Instructors for this course focused on ensuring that all participants would come away with a basic familiarity with the various topics discussed. The goal was to devise an approach which demonstrated the principles and practices of local government through examining US models and, more importantly, extracting applications for the participants’ respective country environments and personal work portfolios.

In general, the responses to the course were favorable. It is felt that the course is ready for regular annual offerings in the US. Furthermore, the course can also be adapted to target particular regions and/or topics. Possible options for a regional course include Southeast Asia or Southern Africa.

2. Second “Cities Matter” Course: Contents and Adjustments

2.a. Course Contents

The principle mission of the course remained the same -- to assist USAID program staff in thinking strategically about what is necessary to strengthen urban government in their regions. The importance of local administration is being increasingly recognized in the context of the dismal conditions in many of the world’s cities. It is critical that local governments have the capacity to provide basic services to swelling numbers of inhabitants. Moreover, the failures of local administration are becoming ever more stark in many parts of the world, with serious consequences for everything from public health to capital formation.

Effective local governance allows cities to advance democracy, capitalize on investment opportunities and provide for public goods and basic services. But what are the best principles and practices? In our view they constitute the following:

- Strong political, administrative, and economic leadership
- Efficient administrative structure
- Effective communication with citizens

- Transparent fiscal practices that encourage investment and generate trust in the governing process
- Decisions which incorporate the policy of environmental protection

To this end, using the U.S. local government model and information from other countries, we constructed a course that allowed the participants to investigate how cities in other parts of the world can become active partners in the governing process of the country.

2.b. Substantive Adjustments

Efforts were made to improve the course over the pilot held in March in Annapolis, Maryland. Below is a listing of the changes incorporated into the second course:

- Added an introductory session that addressed and defined key terms for the non-Americans participating in the course. This session highlighted terms that the participants would encounter over the next week. Although the session was designed for non-Americans, many people who have lived in the U.S. attended and found that it expanded their knowledge of local government.
- Expanded the presentation addressing urban program strategies and their linkages to the course. Barbara Turner provided an overview of the goals and strategies of urban programs, which provided a context for the course and its expected use.
- Expanded dialogues on the forms of local government and the impact these different forms have on leadership and administration. An open forum with Bill Hansell was held, giving participants more time to learn about the various structure of local government in U.S., how these structures evolved and the inherent value of each.
- Eliminated the legal framework discussion. Instead, the sessions demonstrated that good local governance facilitates an enabling legal framework through efficient use of resources and active citizen participation.
- Expanded the discussion on citizen participation. This session established a frame of reference, described techniques, and identified appropriate points of intervention. Considerable work went into the redesign of this section. Particular emphasis was given to both techniques that facilitate citizen involvement as well as the effect of the techniques. David Baker demonstrated how important it is to understand what the objective of involving citizens is and the most constructive methods of receiving and providing input.
- Rescheduled and restructured the practicum day to encourage more application and sharing of experiences. Because the field practicum was the first and only exposure many participants had to local government, it was determined that having the trip earlier in the week rather than on the last day would be a more effective way of gaining feedback, sharing information and applying the lessons learned. Prior to departing for the field the participants were required to consider the trip as it related

to expected and actual outcomes, and upon returning, in-depth discussions were held. This greatly enhanced the learning value of the field practicum.

- Expanded the applications session. Chris Gates, Executive Director of the National Civic League, offered a challenge to the participants. In essence he asked each member to consider the application of the lessons that were learned.
- The goals and orientation of the course were more explicitly stated in the original announcement and the introduction. This gave participants a better idea of what to expect so that they were not surprised that the course had an urban focus and did not directly address USAID direct practices.

2.c. Logistical Adjustments

The course was held in the Best Western Old Colony Inn in Alexandria, Virginia. The catering and conference services provided were substandard. We found the hotel staff inexcusably disorganized and not responsive to our needs. In addition, the proximity to Washington USAID offices was problematic. Some of the DC-based participants elected to pick and choose session attendance as they seemed more aware of the pressures of their jobs. This was both disruptive and left the participants with an incomplete knowledge base.

The size of the class was also somewhat smaller than the original course. We felt that this facilitated more interaction among the participants and allowed them to take more active roles. In the future, we hope to continue to limit the number of participants to 30.

The course was scheduled for the final week in June in hopes that Mission staff could combine attending the course with their home leaves. Unfortunately, the official announcement of the course was delayed so that it was too late for mission staff to work the course into their plans. As a result, the participants were largely FSNs or Washington-based. In the future, every effort will be made to either avoid holiday times or else post the announcement well in advance. We feel that a more diverse group would have been more beneficial as participants could have learned about more experiences around the world. Meanwhile, representatives from Asia, Africa, and Latin America had very few colleagues attending the course with whom to interact about regional developments.

3. Summary of Evaluations

To get feedback on the course, at the end of the week a formal discussion was held and participants were asked to fill out a lengthy evaluation. The responses to the course were very positive. On a scale of one to ten, the most frequent score was 8 and the average score 8.15. The lowest score was 7, and three participants awarded scores of 10 or “9+.” Generally, the participants felt that they had gained a much more comprehensive understanding of the organization, management, and functions of local government as well as the complexity of balancing its competing interests and roles.

The participants identified several areas of the course that stood out as being particularly informative. These sessions included:

- The field practica, which were held on Thursday and followed by a formal discussion, were overwhelmingly the most popular aspect of the course. Participants commented that this provided an excellent opportunity to see the applications of what had been learned in the earlier part of the week. One of the most common suggestions to improve the course was to hold *additional* field trips.
- The session on citizen participation and the final keynote, “Local Government as an Agent for Social Change,” received very positive comments. A few remarked that it might be appropriate to combine and expand these two sessions.
- Several participants praised the small interactive workshops and opportunity to interact with colleagues working on similar issues throughout the world.
- Other sessions that were singled out for praise included “Enabling Local Government to Work” and “Managing the Multiple Roles of Local Government.”

There were several suggestions that participants offered to improve the course. Critical points that will be considered in planning future courses include:

- Strengthening the day devoted to finance and investment. This workshop received the strongest reviews from the pilot training course held in Annapolis in March. Unfortunately, for this course the invited speaker on municipal bonds gave a presentation that was far too technical for the audience and did not sufficiently address issues relevant to cities in developing countries. In addition, some participants commented that the speakers for the morning session gave presentations that were so similar they were redundant rather than complementary. In the future, every effort will be made to ensure that speakers will target the audience more sensitively. We may consider returning to the format for this day used in the Annapolis course; however, we feel that the weaknesses of this day had more to do with the presentations than the revised structure.
- Incorporating international experiences. In response to evaluations from the March course, we did try to include more international perspectives while retaining the US example as a model. Fewer participants criticized the course for being too focused on the US; however, several still suggested more international case studies. The session titled, “International Learning for Local Governments” received somewhat mixed reviews. Most participants seemed to value learning about the partnership between Manzini, Swaziland and Durham, NC and greatly enjoyed hearing the perspective of Joy Ndwandwe, a local government official in Swaziland. We hope that more stimulating speakers for this session will strengthen its impact.

- Use of “real life” examples. Some participants felt that some of the sessions were too theoretical, and in general the workshops that were more “hands on” (especially the field practica) received the most favorable reviews. We plan to further work with each speaker to ensure that each presentation/workshop has a practical emphasis.
- Directly addressing USAID best practices. The participants indicated that they benefited from learning from their colleagues, and interactive small group workshops were specifically designed to develop this interaction. At the same time, several participants commented that they also would have appreciated a session on USAID best practices. We will consider inviting representatives from USAID to give such a workshop.
- Diversity of participants and representation of FSNs. About half of the participants worked in or with CEE or NIS countries, with only a handful representing Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Some participants commented that they felt they would have benefited from interacting with colleagues from other regions and other program areas. In addition, several commented that a few Americans tended to dominate discussion, and that FSNs should be encouraged to play more active roles.
- Length of the course. This five-day training covers an enormous subject, touching on many key areas only briefly. Several participants suggested either lengthening the course and/or holding advanced courses that focus on particular regions or sectors.
- Concurrent panels on “Vehicles for Sustainability and Institutional Development.” Several participants felt that the Friday morning concurrent panels on Training and on Municipal Associations were too short and rushed. While several participants gave these panels strong reviews, others indicated that the subjects were not as directly relevant to their work as the other sessions. Efforts will be made not to squeeze these sessions and to address concerns of relevancy, perhaps by allowing participants to select from a number of panels.

4. Recommendations

Recommendations fall into two categories: those related to the course itself and broader training opportunities.

- Retain the current structure, but strengthen the opening sessions by articulating more clearly how the course objectives and structure are linked to Urban Programs “Making Cities Work” structures.
- Identify and articulate expected practical outcomes rather than just the process of local government practices. These could form the basis for program indicators that can be used by USAID staff for evaluation purposes.

- Develop advanced courses in three key areas:
 - Urban Environmental Policies and Programs
 - Municipal Finance and Credit
 - Local Government and Economic Development
- Hold another introductory course in the fall of 1999. This course should be held in a location that is outside of easy commuting distance to USAID offices in order to lower the absentee rate.
- Develop a prototype CD-Rom for the introductory course, if approved by USAID.

5. Attachments

5.a. List of Participants

5.b. Block Agenda

5.c. Session Summaries

List of Participants

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Cities Matter: Principles and Practices of Local Government

Sunday, June 21	Monday, June 22	Tuesday, June 23	Wednesday, June 24	Thursday, June 25	Friday, June 26
	<p>7:30 Continental Breakfast 8:30 Welcome – ICMA/ USAID 8:45 Opening Remarks: “Making Cities Work” 9:15 Introduction to the Course and Learning Goals Exercise</p> <p>10:30 Break</p> <p>11:00 International Learning for Local Governments</p>	<p>7:30 Continental Breakfast 8:30 Opening – Sharing of Reflections 8:45 Managing the Multiple Roles of Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel and Small Group Task <p>10:00 Break</p> <p>10:30 Small Group Reports and Discussion</p>	<p>7:30 Continental Breakfast 8:30 Opening – Sharing of Reflections 8:45: A New Financial Paradigm for Local Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation <p>9:15 The Link Between Service Provision and Revenues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation <p>10:30 Break</p> <p>10:45 Regional Group Analysis</p>	<p>7:30 Continental Breakfast 8:30 Opening: Sharing of Reflections 8:45 Introduction to the Field Practica</p> <p>10:00 Site Visits to Area Local Governments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance/Investment Public Health/ Social Services Environmental Services 	<p>7:30 Continental Breakfast 8:30 Opening: Sharing of Reflections 8:45 Vehicles for Sustainability and Institutional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concurrent Panels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Municipal Associations <p>10:00 Break 10:15 Concurrent Panels Continued</p> <p>11:15 “The Urban Lens”</p>
	12:00 Catered Lunch	12:00 Lunch in Alexandria	12:30 Catered Lunch	12:00 Box Lunch	12:15 Lunch in Alexandria
<p>4:00 Introduction to the US Governmental System and Terminology (optional) 6:00 Wine and Cheese Reception 8:00 Close</p>	<p>1:00 Enabling Local Government to Work: Legal Framework, Structure and Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation and Discussion <p>3:00 Break 3:30 Enabling Local Government to Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plenary Dialogue <p>5:00 Reflections on the Day 5:30 Close</p>	<p>1:30 Citizen Participation: Citizen Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaker and Regional Task <p>3:30 Break 3:45 Regional Group Reports</p> <p>5:00 Reflections on the Day 5:30 Close</p>	<p>1:30 Securing Capital Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation <p>2:45 Break 3:00 Local Community Analysis</p> <p>5:00 Reflections on the Day 5:30 Happy Hour – Cash Bar and Snacks</p>	<p>3:00 Return to Hotel 3:15 Small Group Discussions 4:00 Practicum Group Presentations 5:00 Reflections on the Day 5:30 Close</p>	<p>1:30 Local Government as an Agent for Social Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keynote Speech and Discussion <p>3:00 Break 3:15 Applications Session 4:15 Evaluation</p> <p>5:00 Reflections on the Day 5:30 Cash Bar 6:00 Dinner and Farewell Ceremony 8:00 Close</p>

8:45 AM

Monday, June 22

Opening Remarks: Making Cities Work

- Session Objectives
- *To present current AID/W views on the role of local government in development.*
 - *To introduce the Agency's "Making Cities Work" strategy.*

Presenter **Barbara Turner**, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator, Global Bureau, USAID.

Session Summary Urbanization is becoming a key factor in sustainable development. In the next year, more than 50% of the world will live in urban areas. The challenge to development practitioners is to ensure that this is not a destabilizing force.

USAID has become increasingly sensitive to the vital role that cities play in development. The Agency recently examined its programs in the context of continuing urbanization, and determined that further attention to the functioning of local governments as providers of critical environmental services, as enablers of economic growth, and as vital democratic institutions is warranted. The paper "Making Cities Work" embodies current Agency thinking in these areas.

9:15 AM

Monday, June 22

Introduction to the Course

- Session Objectives
- *To provide a brief overview of why cities and their local governments matter and what their role is or could be vis-à-vis the administrative framework of the national government.*
 - *To present and explain the objectives of the course.*
 - *To explain the intended linkages between the sessions and how they relate to the overall objectives of the course.*

Presenters

Deborah Kimble, Senior Advisor, International Municipal Programs, ICMA
Peter Feiden, Assistant Director, International Municipal Programs, ICMA
Jim Carney, Training Consultant, ICMA
Scott McDonald, Research Assistant, ICMA

Session Summary

The title of the course, "Cities matter: Principles and Practices of Local Government," highlights the importance of cities and the role of local government in empowering them. In the international development community, three visions of local government dominate: local government as a forum for political reform; local government as an administrative unit; and, local government as a generator of economic activity. This course seeks to explore the linkages among these visions and to generate a more integrated view of the promise and prospect of local government.

11:00 AM

Monday, June 22

International Learning for Municipal Development

- Session Objectives
- *To explore how municipalities develop and innovate by looking beyond their own organizations to incorporate and adapt from other municipalities.*
 - *To identify aspects of local government management that are more or less generic worldwide irrespective of political systems, cultures, and socioeconomic conditions.*
 - *To discuss the role of international learning to accelerate the adaptation of local governments to current conditions and demands on their organizations.*

Facilitators **Joy Ndwandwe**, Acting Town Clerk, Manzini, Swaziland
 Orville Powell, Former City-Manager, Durham, North Carolina

Session Summary This training program is, fundamentally, about learning from colleagues who work in different governmental systems amidst different cultures. As the world gets smaller and the complexity of urban management continues to grow, successful local governments will find it ever more important to look outside their own organizations for solutions and approaches that can be adapted to local circumstances. But to fully take advantage of external models and expertise, it is necessary to appreciate those aspects of local government in your own country that are common to those found elsewhere.

1:00 PM

Monday, June 22

Organizing Local Government To Work: Legal Framework, Structure, and Leadership

- Session Objectives*
- *To describe the more common forms of local government organization and their legal basis.*
 - *To explain the effects of organization on the respective roles of elected local leaders and appointed administrators.*
 - *To highlight ways in which particular forms of local governments might be appropriate for local conditions.*

Presenter **Bill Hansell**, Executive Director, ICMA

Session Summary This session will examine some of the more common generic ways in which local governments are legally constituted and organized. It will consider the characteristics of strong or executive mayor forms, city manager forms, commission structures, and others. In so doing, it will explore the relationship between the city's political leadership and professional management. It will provide a broad overview of the organization of the local government in relation to national and local development objectives, and in relation to concerns for transparency and citizen involvement and the need for effective long-term strategies and plans.

8:45 AM

Tuesday, June 23

Managing the Multiple Roles of Local Government

- Session Objectives*
- *To identify some of the common programs and services of local governments.*
 - *To provide examples of alternative approaches to service provision.*
 - *To explain techniques used by local administrators to improve the coordination and delivery of services and programs, and to address conflicts inherent to the multiple objectives of local government.*

Presenters

Deborah Kimble, ICMA

Jeffrey A. Finkle, Executive Director, Council for Urban Economic Development

Frank Kiolbassa, President, Institute for Infrastructure & Environmental Development, District of Columbia

Clayton White, East District Manager, City of Richmond

Session Summary

Cities are the “place” where ideas, commerce, and people converge. National governments may enact legislation, but the impact is felt locally. Corporations may sell globally, but the effects of their production systems are felt locally. And while people physically live in “communities”, their interactions and actions are felt locally. Local government mediates this convergence.

This session looks at how the demands generated by the activities in various spheres of communities are mediated through local government administration. In particular we will explore the coordination of multiple services from the perspective of the mayor / city manager. Experts from three functional service areas—economic development, housing, and environmental services—will discuss how they manage or deliver services or manage programs.

1:30 PM

Tuesday, June 23

Citizen Participation: Citizen Empowerment

- Session Objectives*
- *To develop a model to assist participants to understand the political, legal, and social/environmental conditions necessary for effective citizen participation.*
 - *To illuminate the difference between various types of citizen participation: citizen information, citizen involvement, and citizen as service deliverer.*
 - *To provide examples of effective citizen participation techniques.*
 - *To identify the necessary administrative support systems that must be in place to ensure that citizen participation is sustainable.*

Presenters

Deborah Kimble, ICMA

David Baker, President, Columbus Urban Growth Corporation

Session Summary

Involving citizens in the process of governance is a difficult, messy, yet fulfilling and necessary task. The challenges are many. Citizens in most transitional and developing countries are not automatically compelled to participate, so what conditions are necessary to change this behavior. Citizens are not always sure what they are to contribute (for that matter, neither are local officials). Involving citizens invokes an interesting conundrum: how do you go about making government more efficient while at the same time involving citizens, which tends to drag out the governing and decision making process. This session is designed to provide a lens through which to view the participatory process, allowing the course participants to determine how best to go about stimulating citizen involvement given the social, political, and economic conditions of their respective countries.

8:45 AM

Thursday, June 25

Field Practicum

- Session Objectives
- To understand in further depth how one particular aspect of local government functions.
 - *To have local government practitioners address the particular issues and questions that you have at this stage in the Program.*

Session Summary The fourth day of the Program is reserved for a field practicum. This will be an opportunity for you to get out of the classroom and explore in further depth your questions about how local government functions with practitioners in the Washington, D.C. area.

Some field visits also offer an opportunity to see some of the technology in use by local governments in the area. We have offered three tracks for the day, each corresponding to a key function common to local governments in many parts of the world: 1) social services, 2) environmental services, and 3) local government finance. Earlier in the week you will have selected one of these for yourself.

Schedule

8:45 Preparation for the Practicum

With others in your group for today, identify and list the key questions that you have and which you feel can be addressed during the field visit. These might be questions or issues that you brought to the course, or those that have come to mind during the last few days as we have delved into the subject matter. We suggest that you select a spokesperson who can consolidate your issues into one list of key points you want to cover.

10:00 - 3:00 Field Visits

Each group will leave the hotel for their meetings with the local government. We have asked that actual presentations by local governments be short and concise so that adequate time is available for you to lead the dialogue with local staff to address the key issues of your group. Each of you will have a box lunch and we will provide each group with a few extras in the event that you and personnel from the local government decide to work through the lunch hour.

3:15 Small Group Discussions

Each of the three groups will meet on their own upon their return. The purpose is to identify the key things learned and how these might be applicable to your conditions in your home countries.

4:00 Group Presentations

Each group will present to the entire class the key learnings from the field visit, and discuss their applicability overseas.

8:45 AM

Friday, June 26

Vehicles for Sustainability and Institutional Development

- Session Objectives*
- *To explore various vehicles for increasing the sustainability of effective local governance and the strengthening of local institutions.*
 - *To present opportunities to support local government by developing the skills of local government leaders and to present the service and advocacy institutions that serve local governments.*

Panelists

Training:

Jim Carney, Trainer

Peter Feiden, ICMA

Kurt Jenne, Institute for Government, University of North Carolina

Municipal Associations:

Clay Wirt, Virginia Municipal League

, National League of Cities

Betsey Sherman, Director of Member Services, ICMA

Session Summary

There will be two concurrent, one-hour sessions, described below. The sessions will then be conducted again for the second hour. Each workshop participant will attend both sessions.

Session 1—Training. For this panel, we will look at such issues as determining the training needs of city management professionals, responding to the needs of elected leaders, working with partner institutions, developing a sustainable training approach, and instilling the principle and practice of continual professional development.

Session 2—Municipal Associations. This panel discussion will look at the various roles of municipal associations. It will explore different organizational structures for these associations and their potential to be effective in different countries. It will also examine the various approaches to making these associations self-sustaining while responding to member needs.

11:15 AM

Friday, June 26

The Urban Lens

- Session Objectives
- To introduce one of the means by which the "Making Cities Work" *initiative will be used to inform USAID's programming of urban issues..*
 - To provide an opportunity for USAID practitioners to influence the design of the Urban Lens tool by suggesting features which would increase the site's usability, efficiency, and relevance to the program design process.

Presenter **Mark Brown, PADCO**

Session Summary "Making Cities Work" is a new initiative in USAID, undertaken at the request of the Administrator, to encourage greater awareness of urban issues throughout the wide range of Agency sectoral programming. The "Urban Lens" is an outgrowth of that initiative and aims to provide a virtual lens through which USAID personnel of all sectors can access resources to evaluate their policies and programs to better consider the urban implications. Through the Urban Lens website on the World Wide Web, USAID employees and others will be able to download tools and resources based on USAID's decades of experience in urbanization. Model documents, program review reports, evaluations, project summaries, case studies, and best practices will be among those resources immediately accessible to the user either by search or by increasingly specific chosen topics of interest.

Workshop participants will be given an opportunity to see the first mock-up of the site design and provide feedback to the developers at PADCO on ways in which the site would better meet their needs and those of their "non-urban" USAID colleagues.

1:30 PM

Friday, June 26

Local Government as an Agent for Social Change

Session Objectives ➤ *To illustrate how local governments and communities work together for purposes of advancing democratic principles and social conditions*

➤ To challenge the participants to determine ways in which they can encourage local officials in their respective countries to take up the charge of becoming agents of social change.

Presenter **Chris Gates**, President, National Civic League

Session Summary Communities in the United States have a history of doing what is necessary to improve the conditions of cities. The challenges faced by local leaders in the United States may not be as extreme as their counterparts in transitional and developing countries, but they are similar. Fewer public sector dollars, changes in society brought on by a reordering of the world economy, emphasis on local not national decision-making, dispersion of community power, and ever increasing diversity in communities are all issues which resonate with local officials. In this session a challenge will be offered to the participants asking them to consider collaborative approaches to solving these problems. Examples will be given of communities who have been successful at meeting this challenge.

3:30 PM

Friday, June 26

Applications

Session Objectives ➤ *To reflect on what you have learned this week and to develop a plan to apply this in your work.*

Presenter **Jim Carney, ICMA**

Session Summary This course was designed to provide you with conceptual and practical information that can serve you in your work with USAID. During this session you will develop your own plan on how to apply what you have learned. First reflect on your learning goals. Then you might review the agenda, the notebook, and your notes from the course. In thinking about how to apply the course learnings, consider the full breadth of your work for USAID, including analysis, program design, and management. Consider current job responsibilities within the Agency as well as your interests in possible future postings and/or program responsibilities. Also consider the need for effective communication with counterparts on democracy and governance issues.

You may find it helpful to undertake this task with a partner, or at least share your applications plan with one or more of your colleagues before we re-convene.